

Englesberg

March 16, 1951.

Dear Ellis:

Sorry to have put this off so long- I hope it didn't seriously inconvenience you. Unfortunately I took a first glance at it at a time that I couldn't sit down to it, and this inhibited me since.

In the interest of saving time, I'm enclosing my raw comments. You'll have to figure out which to discount as being too hasty or unconsidered; I hope I haven't left out anything important.

In general, the language seems unnecessarily wordy. I've tried to point out a few specific cases, but I would suggest that you go over it very carefully yourself, asking yourself word by word, and sentence by sentence, whether this couldn't be left out, or phrased more succinctly. You will have to decide whether your publication is to put your work on record, or whether you want the paper to be read and understood. For the latter, it may often be necessary to omit accounts of experiments which might seem important for having occupied a good deal of your research time. There are a few mal-grammatizations, especially split infinitives. You have the peculiar difficulty that many of your phrases are monotonously, albeit straightforwardly, constructed. This isn't important.

The discussion is possibly too long, not for covering too much ground, but for too laborious a statement.

Your experiments are admittedly closely reasoned, but especially for this reason it is essential to omit everything not absolutely essential to the clear statement of your argument. It should be possible, and I think greatly desirable, to shorten your text by about a fourth.

I was unfortunately stuck as chairman for a session of the SAB, and I just received the abstracts, including your own. If I show my face at the meetings at all then, I'll have to chair this session (and not take time to comment). See you then,

Sincerely,

Joshua Lederberg